

REMARKS

Claims 20, 22, and 31 are canceled without prejudice to their continued prosecution in a continuation and/or divisional application.

Each of claims 21, 23, and 24—which the Examiner indicated contain allowable subject matter—have been rewritten in independent form in accordance with the Examiner's suggestion.

In accordance with MPEP 714.12, Applicant respectfully submits that the present amendment is appropriate for entry under 37 CFR § 1.116 inasmuch as it merely cancels claims and places the application in condition for allowance. Entry of the present amendment is, therefore, respectfully requested.

Upon entry of this Response, claims 1, 3, 5, 7-19, 21, 23-30, and 32-48 are present and active in the application.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102

The rejection of claims 20, 22, and 31 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by *Roberts et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 5,644,958) has been rendered moot by the cancellation without prejudice of these claims. Accordingly, withdrawal of this ground of rejection is respectfully requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

The allowance of claims 1, 3, 5, 7-19 and 33-48 is noted with appreciation.


The Examiner's indication that claims 21, 23-30, and 32 contain allowable subject matter is likewise noted with appreciation. In accordance with the Examiner's suggestion, each of claims 21, 23, and 24 has been rewritten in independent form to incorporate the recitations of previous base claim 20. Inasmuch as claims 25-30 and 32 depend directly or indirectly from newly rewritten independent claim 24, Applicant respectfully submits that these dependent claims are allowable as presently written.

Conclusion

In view of the Amendment and Remarks set forth above, Applicant respectfully submits that the claimed invention is in condition for allowance. Early notification to such effect is earnestly solicited.

If for any reason the Examiner feels that the above Amendment and Remarks do not put the claims in condition to be allowed, and that a discussion would be helpful to advance prosecution, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner contact the undersigned agent directly at (312)-321-4257.

Respectfully submitted,


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